

# **WELDON-STUPAK BILL WOULD BAN HUMAN CLONING**

For Immediate Release: January 8, 2003

WASHINGTON - Congressmen Dave Weldon, M.D. (R-FL) and Bart Stupak (D-MI) re-introduced a bill today that would ban human cloning. The Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2003 would prohibit any person or entity, in or affecting interstate commerce, from knowingly: (1) performing or attempting to perform human cloning; (2) participating in such an attempt; (3) shipping or receiving an embryo produced from human cloning; or (4) importing such an embryo.

A nearly identical bill, the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2001 (H.R. 2505), also introduced by Congressmen Weldon and Stupak in the 107th Congress, was passed in July 2001 by the United States House with a strong bipartisan vote of 265-162. The United States Senate failed to take up the previous Weldon-Stupak Bill during the 107th Congress, despite an urging to do so from President Bush.

"Human cloning is baby manufacture. Any attempt at human cloning, for whatever purpose, is a gross form of human experimentation that the American people oppose," said Weldon. "Human cloning hasn't cured any diseases, it will commercialize women's eggs and wombs, it poses serious risks to the cloned child to be, and violates human dignity. Indeed, those who perform experimental research cloning will only make reproductive cloning easier, and increase the likelihood that even more rogue scientists will produce cloned babies."

"Although earlier legislative efforts to address the issue of human cloning have stalled, widespread public concern about the ethics of the procedure and an increased awareness of the feasibility of human cloning may help spur passage of a ban," Stupak said. "There are many scientific, ethical, legal and moral questions surrounding human cloning, and I look forward to working with all my House colleagues to pass legislation that offers the greatest protection and dignity for all individuals."

Weldon and Stupak hope that the recently sworn in 108th Congress will immediately act on their legislation.

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# Why Human Cloning Needs to Be Banned

STATEMENT BY REP. DAVE WELDON, M.D.

January 8, 2003

In 1997, Dolly the sheep became the first cloned mammal. Since then several species have been cloned, increasing the likelihood that someone would clone a human being. Rogue scientists announced plans to clone humans in March of 2001. On July 31, 2001, the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation that Congressman Stupak and I introduced to ban human cloning by a bipartisan majority. Despite the President's strong support, the Senate did not act.

On December 26th, Clonaid announced the birth of the first cloned human baby, nicknamed Eve. Since then, they have announced two subsequent births. Though I am skeptical about the legitimacy of their claims, it is certain that some scientists are rushing to perform human cloning, both for research and reproductive purposes.

As a medical doctor, who still sees patients once a month, I am very interested in seeing that we pursue real cures for the diseases that afflict our neighbors, friends, and family members. Fortunately, we can find these cures with alternatives rather than traveling down the path of human cloning and a new eugenics.

The fact is that adult stem cells have already been used successfully in over 45 clinical trials to treat humans. They aren't susceptible to tumor formation and avoid immune rejection. Indeed, adult stem cells have already been used to treat cancers, restore vision to patients who were legally blind, and treat multiple sclerosis. Researchers recently treated a 57 year old man with Parkinson's using his own brain stem cells.

Despite a few prominent and rogue scientists who advocate cloning human babies, most people oppose this practice. However, creating cloned live-born human children necessarily begins by creating cloned human embryos, a process which some also propose as a way to create embryos for experimental research or as sources of cells and tissues for theoretical treatment of various diseases. There are serious genetic abnormalities involved in cloning. Indeed, experimental research cloning has not been used to cure one disease in any animal model.

There are also practical obstacles to clinical success with cloning. It would require numerous eggs, it is inefficient, and the slow development of cloned stem cells make it unlikely to become a routine clinical procedure.

Cloning for research is not only unethical because it involves the creation of nascent human life for the sole purpose of experimental research, but

also such experimental research is unethical because it endangers women. Advocates of cloning claim it will cure millions of people with diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, etc. But to do so millions of eggs will be required. If the claims of pro-cloners were to turn out true, millions of women would undergo an invasive procedure and use superovulatory drugs with risks, not to have a baby as with IVF, but solely for money. As many feminists have stated, research cloning will undoubtedly lead to a new exploitation of women, particularly those with little means.

The pro-cloning lobby hopes to generate funds from patents for basic research, which will probably not be used in clinical use. Why divert funds away from successful research that is currently being developed and used to treat people?

Advocates of cloning want only to ban implanting the cloned embryo into a woman's uterus. However, the United States Department of Justice issued an analysis of cloning bills and stated that the Specter/Kennedy/Feinstein bill is unenforceable. Assistant Attorney General Dan Bryant stated, "Anything short of an outright ban would present ... difficulties to law enforcement."

Furthermore, at a hearing on May 15, 2002 Dr. Bryan Cowan, representing the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, testified before Congress that he opposed reproductive cloning "at this time" and admitted that as soon as some of the safety issues are resolved they want to engage in reproductive cloning. Research cloning will pave the way for reproductive cloning. Any attempt at human cloning, for whatever purpose, is utterly irresponsible. Human cloning is baby manufacture, and the American people oppose it.

Clearly the Weldon/Stupak human cloning bill would effectively prevent human cloning from being performed in the United States.